

## Environment, Natural Resources, and Society

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### Overview

Welcome to Environment, Natural Resources, and Society! This course is designed to explore the dynamic relationship between human society and the natural environment. It gives students a foundation in the sociological approaches to understanding transformations in the human community and the natural environment. We will explore the interaction between the natural world and the social world, realizing how the natural system is embedded within our social system, but also how environmental problems are social problems. This will lead us to take on some of today's most pressing environmental real-world challenges in the U.S. as well as abroad. You will gain a better understanding of the socioeconomic and political forces that shape our attitudes about environment and guide our behavior, in addition to how these forces mold our collective relationship to the natural world. We will also explore literature that seeks to promote a more sustainable relationship with nature, some of which may question key basic assumptions about our everyday life.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Participation. 10%. The quality of our collective experience in this course depends on your active participation. Participation means not only attending class, but keeping up with the readings, and being able to share your thoughts on the readings with others in the course. In addition, you will bring in and share at least five news items that are related to the topics that we discuss in class. We will start every class with 10-15 minutes of discussion of current news items that relate to the topic/course in general. I would encourage you to read the newspaper every week to find items that are appropriate to the class. This not only allows you to become a better educated global citizen, but also allows you to make the course more interesting to yourself and others by selecting items that you find thought provoking. News items should be from appropriate news sources, for example The New York Times, The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, etc. Some online news sources, such as yahoo news, are not appropriate sources. For each news item, you should be prepared to summarize the article, relevant methods and data and how it relates to class. You will keep track of the title, the day you shared the item and the electronic link in your readings journal at the back on a page entitled "News Items."

Readings Journal. 15%. Every week you will keep a journal on at least two of the readings for that week. I encourage you to do this for every reading, but that is up to you. You will write a brief summary of the important aspects of the reading. This should include the main argument, the key terms and how the reading relates to the overall topic we are discussing in class. In addition you will note at least one question you have about the reading and your critiques (if relevant). This journal should be kept in a notebook that you use exclusively for this purpose. You should bring it to every class. It will facilitate our discussion and serve as a study guide to you. I will collect these at three points in the semester, see syllabus for dates.

Community Learning Project. 20%. This exercise seeks to serve as a bridge between the academic knowledge we are gaining in the classroom and the experiential knowledge that we can gain in the community. There are three parts to the assignment: proposal outline, fieldwork journal and presentation.

*Proposal Outline.* Before week 4 begins you must meet with the instructor to seek approval for your proposed project. Please schedule the meeting during my office hours. You will bring an outline of your activity to this meeting. In the outline you should answer the following questions: Why is this particular issue important to you and to the broader community? How does it relate/contribute to your understanding of the course material? In addition you should describe your plan – when will you begin your activity, how often will you participate, what will your participation entail and what methods will you use to gather data.

*Fieldwork Journal.* Once you identify your topic, you need to engage in the community to deepen your understanding of the issue. For example, you can observe social interactions in a farmer's market, you could attend a town hall meeting on a relevant issue, you could volunteer at a food pantry, etc. Be creative and have fun! This is your chance to enhance your knowledge in an area that is of interest to you in particular and share your excitement for the issue with others in the class. The ideal fieldwork experience will be divided into multiple activities throughout the semester (not just one). Think about what you are trying to understand through a sociological lens and why it is important. You will document this field experience in a journal. You will take notes on what stands out to you, what you learn and observe that relates to the class. You will also use this journal to take your 'field notes.' We will spend time in class in week 5 discussing the community learning project and how to get the most out of your experience. It will be a good time to gather valuable feedback to refine your project and to ask questions about doing fieldwork. You will hand in your fieldwork journal in week 14 or 15 on the date you do your presentation.

*Presentation.* At the end of the semester you will have the chance to share your project with the class. You will have 15 minutes to share your project with others. In your presentation you should 1) describe your project; 2) reflect on the fieldwork experience; 3) apply the concepts and theories from the course to analyze your findings. You can choose the way you share your project. Creativity is encouraged. Tell us (or show us) what you learned!

Papers. 30%. You will select two activity-based paper topics (15% each) from the list below. You will do the activity and write up a two-page typed single-spaced paper on them. A grading rubric will be given out in class before the paper is due. The papers are due in class in week 6 and in week 13. The choices are as follows:

- 1) Keep a Food Diary for one day
- 2) Environmental Racism Analysis of your community
- 3) Environmental Footprint Activity for one day
- 4) Food Desert: Shop for one week in a convenience store
- 5) Use FADS to trace consumption patterns for one or more food items

Final Exam. 25%. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions. Your readings journal will be an excellent guide to assist you in the studying process. I will also offer a study guide.

## Attendance Policy

Attendance is essential to your learning experience in this class. It is mandatory and will make up part of your participation grade. You are allowed three unexcused absences throughout the semester without penalty to your participation grade. If you must miss more than this, for a legitimate reason, i.e. you have an ongoing medical issue that prohibits you from attending class, you should contact me as soon as possible so that we can make alternate arrangements. Do not wait until the end of the semester when it is too late to make any adjustments.

## Assignment Policy

You are required to submit all assignments on time. Late assignment will be penalized a letter grade per day they are late. All assignments should include your name in the heading and should use 12-point, Times New Roman font, single-spacing, 1-inch margins. If you do not follow these guidelines, you will lose significant points. Please spell check and proof read all assignments.

## Grading Scale

A 93+

AB 92.9-88

B 87.9-83

BC 82.9-77

C 76.9-70

D 69.9-60

F 59.9-

## Academic Honesty

The University takes academic honesty very seriously. If you are found to be cheating on a paper, you will be reported to the Dean of Students. All of the work that you submit for the class must be your own work. You are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this appears straightforward, it can be sometimes confusing. Whenever you are unsure about quoting and citing, please come to see me to figure out the best strategy. If you use a web-based source, you can always cite the URL.

For additional information about the plagiarism policy:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

## Use of Technology

No use of laptops, tablet, phones or other electronic devices will be permitted in this class. Although these can be valuable tools for research and study, they often hinder participation and collegiality in the classroom. Several studies have documented how student learn less in the classroom when they rely on these devices. See the New Yorker's article for some insights on this:

<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>

## Communication

I will make an effort to announce any changes to the syllabus in a timely fashion. This changes will be announced in class or via email. Please read any emails you receive about this course. It is ultimately your responsibility to read your email and attend class. If you have trouble receiving course emails, please let me know as soon as possible.

You are welcome to communicate with me via email. The subject line for your emails to me should detail the course number and title. Please expect a reply within 48 hours. However, I will not respond to questions that are answered in the syllabus or in class. You are encouraged to get the contact information from a classmate the first day of class so that if you miss class you can contact them for their notes. I am happy to offer clarifications of those notes, but I will not provide lecture notes for those that miss class.

## Accommodations

I wish to include any student with special needs in this course. In order to enable you to participate fully, please let me know (the earlier the better) if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction or evaluation procedures.

## Reading Materials

This book is available at the University Bookstore and other locations.

- 1) Bell, Michael. 2012. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Los Angeles, CA: Sage-Pine Forge Press.
- 2) Course reserve readings: A print version is available at Student Print (333 East Campus Mall, room 3301).

## Readings

### Week 1: Introduction

- ✓ Carefully read the syllabus
- ✓ Maniates, Michael F. "Individualization: Plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world?" *Global Environmental Politics* 1.3 (2001): 31-52
- ✓ Laszewski, Chuck. "The Sociologists' Take on the Environment." *Contexts* 7.2 (2008): 20-24.

### Week 2: The Marriage of Nature and Society

- ✓ Robbins, Paul, "What is Political Ecology?"
- ✓ O'Connor, James, "History and Nature"
- ❖ Bring in your own definition of nature.

### Week 3: (Re)Defining Nature

- ✓ William Cronon. 1995. "The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature" In *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*. William Cronon (Ed.) pp. 69-90. New York: WW. Norton.
- ✓ *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, chapter 8.
- ❖ DUE: Proposal for Community Learning Project

### Week 4: The Commons

- ✓ Hardin, Garrett. 1968. The Tragedy of the Commons. 162 (13): 1234-48
- ✓ Elinor Ostrom, et. al. "Revisiting the Commons."
- ✓ Bakker, Karen. "The 'Commons' Versus the 'Commodity': Alter-Globalization, Anti-Privatization and the Human Right to Water in the Global South".
- 🎬 Watch film in class: *Blue Gold*

### Week 5: Food (In)Security and Food Sovereignty

- ✓ White, Monica M. “D-Town Farm: African American Resistance to Food Insecurity and the Transformation of Detroit.” *Environmental Practice*. 13.4 (2011): 406-417.
- ✓ Eric Holt-Gimenez and Annie Shattuck. “Food Crises, Food Regimes and Food Movements.”
- ✓ Bello, Walden, “Manufacturing a Food Crisis.
- 📺 Watch film in class: “Food Inc.”



DUE: Readings Journal (content weeks 1-4)

### Week 6: Food and the Environment

- ✓ Foley. 2013. “Changing the Global Food Narrative.” Nov. 12, 2013. <http://ensia.com/voices/changing-the-global-food-narrative/>
- ✓ Kimura, Aya and Krisnawati Suryanata (Eds). 2016. *Food and Power in Hawai'i: Visions of Food Democracy*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. (Exerpt).
- ✓ McKibben, Bill. 2008. “The Year of Eating Locally.” In *Deep Economy*. Chapter 2.
- ✓ Altieri & Nicholls. 2001. “Ecological Impacts of Modern Agriculture in the United States and Latin America.” In *Globalization and the Rural Environment*. Pp. 121-135.
- ❖ DUE: Paper 1.

### Week 7: Consumption and Production

- ✓ Schor, Juliet. 2010. *True Wealth*, Chapters 2-3
- ✓ Jackson, T. 2009. *Prosperity without growth: Economics for a finite planet*. London: Earthscan, chapter 3.
- ✓ *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Ch 2.
- 📺 Watch in class: “The Story of Stuff”

### Week 8: Sustainability

- ✓ Vandana Shiva. “Resources.”
- ✓ *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Ch 3.
- ✓ McKibben, Bill. 2008. *Deep Economy*. Chapter 5 and Afterward.
- ❖ Discuss Community Learning Project

**Week 9: Environmental Attitudes, Behaviors, and Concerns**

- ✓ Hulme, Mike. 2009. *Why We Disagree about Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction, and Opportunity*. Cambridge, UK. Chapter 1.
- ✓ Kollmuss, Anja, and Julian Agyeman. 2002. "Mind the Gap: Why do People Act Environmentally and What are the Barriers to Pro-Environmental Behavior?"
- ✓ *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, Chapter 6, pp. 280-288.
- ✓ "Global Warming's Six Americas Report" (skim).
- 📺 Watch "Heat and Harvest" documentary in class.
- ❖ Take *What is Your Climate Profile* Quiz: <http://uw.kqed.org/climatesurvey/index-kqed.php>

**Week 10: Science and Politics**

- ✓ Oreskes, N. & E.M. Conway. 2012. *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. London: Bloomsbury, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- ✓ Klein, Naomi. 2015. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. the Climate*. Ch. 1.
- ✓ LaCasse, Alexander. 2015. "Why Some Wisconsin State Employees are Barred from Mentioning Climate Change." *The Christian Science Monitor*. April 9, 2015.
- ✓ Schulman, Jeremy. 2015. "These Maps Show Why We Keep Electing Climate Change Deniers." *Mother Jones*. April 9, 2015.
- 📺 Watch film in class: "Gasland"

**Week 11: Green Energy, Green Politics?**

- ✓ Zehler, Ozzie, 2012. *Green Illusions: The Dirty Secrets of Clean Energy and the Future of Environmentalism*. Chapter 1. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- ✓ Magdoff, Fred. & John Bellamy Foster. 2011. *What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know About Capitalism: A Citizen's Guide to Capitalism and the Environment*. Chapter 5. "Can Capitalism Go Green"?
- ✓ Mitchell, Timothy. "Carbon Democracy".



DUE: Readings Journal (content weeks 5-9)

### **Week 12: Environmental Racism**

- ✓ Birds on Fire. *Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4.
- ✓ Cole, Luke and Foster. 2001. *From the Ground up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Movement*. New York: New York University Press. Chapter 3.
- ✓ Roberts, J. T., & Parks, B. C. (2007). A climate of injustice: Global inequality, North-South politics, and climate policy. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, Ch. 2: A model of North-South (non)cooperation.

### **Week 13: Environmental Justice**

- ✓ Mohai, Paul & David Pellow and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. "Environmental Justice. Annual Review of Environment and Resources." Vol. 34: 405-430.
- ✓ An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, pp. 137-145.
- ✓ Lewis. 2015. "Environmental Movements in the Global South" in *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology*. Ch. 18, pp. 300-314.
- ❖ DUE: Paper 2

### **Week 14 and 15: Presentations of Community Learning Projects**



DUE Week 14: Readings Journal (content weeks 10-13)

- ❖ Hand in Fieldwork Journal after individual presentation.